



HIS BOOK

By Rev. ALFRED C. WRIGHT

Of Guadalajara, Mexico

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YEARS ago when Bibles were scarce in this land there lived a little boy in one of the northern states of the republic whose father gave him a book when he had learned to read, saying he had found it among his books and that it seemed to him interesting and to contain good moral teaching. To be sure of it they took the book to the village priest, who, for a wonder, declared it to be a good book; indeed, he said it was the best in the world.

So the boy began to read; the more he read the more interested and delighted he became, and he learned many parts of the book by heart. He continued reading and learning for several years, until after the death of his father. So he came to love the book, supposing there was not another one like it in all the world. When he was twelve or fourteen years of age

it occurred to him one day to take his book with him to school that he might show it to his teacher. What was his surprise and consternation when the master, throwing up his hands, cried : —

“Ave Maria, boy, where did you get that book? Don’t you know it is one of those accursed Protestant books? Give it to me this instant!”

Whereupon he seized the volume and bore it off. The boy cried and begged the teacher to give him back his book, but no, he was told that if he wanted it he must go to the priest, to whom the teacher would take it.

The boy went home inconsolable and wept most of the night. The next day he went to the priest, a newcomer aware of the insidious Protestant teachings of the Bible, who told him that his book had been burned and that he must never read such books lest he be excommunicated by the church.

From that day the boy lost interest in everything. For years he led a careless and even dissolute life, wandering from place to place. At length, while working for a candy maker in El Paso, Texas, the man invited him one evening to go with him to some sort of a gathering; the poor fellow did not know nor much care what it was. As he listlessly entered the room he saw a man standing on a sort of platform with a large book before him

from which he was reading, and he heard some words which he remembered. Instantly breaking from his companion, who tried to restrain him, the young man rushed forward in front of the whole congregation, and stopping in front of the reader, said : —

“Sir, have the kindness to give me back my book. That is my book that you are reading from. They took it away from me years ago, but it is mine.”

And he stretched out his hand toward the preacher to receive his treasure, for he had not the slightest idea there could be more than one such book. The preacher, astonished, asked him why he called the book his.

“I can prove to you it is mine,” said he. “I will tell you what it says.” And he began to repeat passages that he had learned years before.

The result was that they gave him “his book,” and it changed his life. He is now an honored doctor, living in the city of Mexico not far from the place where this is written, a member of an evangelical church, and still believing that there is not in the world a book so good as his book.

The story was related to me by a young man who was converted recently in a meeting held near this place; the doctor had told it to him some time ago.

REV. ALFRED C. WRIGHT is a missionary of the American Board in its Mexican Mission. The missionary force of the Board in Mexico numbers fifteen, occupying six stations, in the cities of Guadalajara, Chihuahua, Hermosillo, Par-
ral, El Fuerte, and C. Guerrero. Connected with these stations are fifty-nine outstations. The population of Mexico is over 13,605,000, only nineteen per cent being of the white race. Twelve years ago more than 10,000,000 of the population could neither read nor write. The value of the schools which the Board maintains in this land, from the kindergarten to the college, can be judged from the above figures, and is emphasized by the story told in this leaflet. Similar stories of interesting life histories from this and the other nineteen missions of the Board are continually appearing in the *Missionary Herald*.



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